



PROFESSOR CHRISTINE SLEETER “RETURNS WHAT WAS STOLEN” TO THE UTE INDIAN TRIBE

Ft. Duchesne, UT —September 25, 2017.

The Business Committee of the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ourah Reservation held a press conference today to welcome Dr. Christine Sleeter to the reservation and to thank her for her generous act of conscience. Dr. Sleeter announced that she will be “returning what was stolen”, as she phrased it, turning over monies she inherited from Ute Tribe land sales in the early 1900s.

Dr. Sleeter’s ancestors homesteaded in the area just outside of Craig, Colorado in about 1881, the same period that the Ute Tribe was being expelled from Colorado. Dr. Sleeter’s great-grandparents sold that land and bought up property in what was becoming Steamboat Springs. That land was eventually sold in the early 1900s and profits were invested. The estimated amount being returned to the Ute Tribe by Dr. Sleeter today is \$250,000.

Dr. Sleeter hopes that other individuals or families who inherited monies from Indian land sales will follow her example in “returning what was stolen”. The Ute Indian Tribe will be receiving Dr. Sleeter’s transfer of funds and current plans are to invest in the improvement of some of the tribal educational facilities.

The United States has been built from the tremendous wealth of the land and resources stolen from Native Americans, yet tribal communities remain some of the poorest places in America. People tend to think about Indian history ending with the Battle of Little Big Horn or some other Romantic version of the past. Indian history, however, continues today and what Professor Sleeter is showing with her “returning what was stolen” is that we must make an effort to reverse the harmful impact of this legacy of stealing from the Indians. The United States is permanently stained by this legacy of crimes against the Indians and only if the nation acts in this manner, to attempt some forms of concrete reparations to Indian tribes, will it then be able to emerge from this black cloud in the nation’s storied history. The attempts to keep the Indians down continue to this day and Professor Sleeter hopes to help reverse this. She hopes that others follow her example and the Ute Indian Tribe hopes the Federal government in particular, sees this and makes more serious, concrete moves to return what was stolen: land, valuable resources, and sacred spaces.

About the Ute Indian Tribe - The Ute Indian Tribe resides on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah. Three bands of Utes comprise the Ute Indian Tribe: the Whiteriver Band, the Uncompahgre Band and the Uintah Band. The Tribe has a membership of more than three thousand individuals, with over half living on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. The Ute Indian Tribe operates its own tribal government and oversees approximately 1.3 million acres of trust land which contains significant oil and gas deposits. The Tribal Business Committee is the governing council of the Tribe.